

Dhordo, the new face of Gujarat Tourism

Dhordo, located on the edge of the India-Pakistan border in Gujarat, has been recognized as the Best Tourism Village of 2023 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, showcasing the village's outstanding achievements and contributions to the tourism industry. Known primarily for hosting the Rann Utsav, a three-month festival in the Rann of Kutch, Dhordo has become synonymous with Gujarat's development and modern amenities, earning its place on the global tourism map.

The village's journey in the tourism sector began with the introduction of the Rann Utsav, a four-month festival that transforms the desert into a unique tent city, complete with essential amenities for visitors. This festival brings Dhordo to life, presenting its natural and cultural treasures to a diverse audience. The economic impact of this approach is evident as it promotes local products nationally and internationally, capturing consumer interest not only in purchasing these items but also in learning the intricate art of crafting them.

Dhordo's achievements are particularly commendable considering the formidable environmental and geographic challenges it faces, compounded by the devastating Bhuj earthquake of 2001. Despite these obstacles, the village has thrived, supported by the state's Heritage Tourism Policy, advocating for the preservation of historic properties through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), and the Gujarat Tourism Policy, offering financial incentives for constructing traditional Bhungas as accommodations, promoting responsible resource utilization.

Recognizing the importance of conserving natural and cultural resources, both the community and government have initiated efforts to sustainably use limited resources. Dhordo has embraced the Heritage Tourism Policy and Gujarat Tourism Policy, ensuring the conservation of old properties through PPP and providing financial incentives to investors for constructing Bhungas.

As tourism takes center stage in Dhordo's economic landscape, the village has made significant strides in banking infrastructure, ATMs, and digital

transactions. Dhordo now boasts 100% coverage of digital cashless transactions, enhancing payment accessibility for tourists.

Traditional Bhungas, circular mud huts that serve as local residences, have become unique tourist accommodations, offering an authentic experience of the local way of life. Resilient against earthquakes, cyclonic winds, and sandstorms, Bhungas showcase the distinctive essence of Gujarat's Kutch desert regions. Originating from a seismic event in 1819, the circular design of Bhungas has endured for almost two centuries, even standing strong after the destructive earthquake in 2001.